

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7840

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 0530

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PROF, BU, US

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER TODOROV

1. SUMMARY. IN MY FIRST MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER STANKO TODOROV APRIL 10, I RAISED ISSUE OF JAMMING OF VOA BROADCASTS TO BULGARIA AND DIVIDED FAMILIES. ON THE VOA ISSUE TODOROV TOOK IN THE POINT THAT THIS IS AN ANOMALY ALTHOUGH HE SAID HE WAS "NOT COMPETENT" IN THE MATTER, AND ON DIVIDED FAMILIES SAID "WITH GOOD WILL ON BOTH SIDES SOMETHING CAN BE DONE". TODOROV MADE USUAL REMARKS ON GOB DESIRE TO ESTABLISH NORMAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS, WELCOMED IMMINENT DENT VISIT AS IMPORTANT STEP IN THAT DIRECTION, AND IN OBLIQUE REMARK WHICH PROBABLY WAS REFERENCE TO PENDING POPOV VISIT, SAID "SOME LACK OF CONFIDENCE APPARENTLY STILL EXISTS" REGARDING MUTUAL EXCHANGE OF GOVERNMENTAL VISITS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN PREPARATION FOR SECRETARY DENT'S ARRIVAL I MADE PROTOCOL VISIT ON TODOROV BUT TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES OF CONTINUED BULGARIAN JAMMING OF VOA AND DIVIDED FAMILIES. REFERRING TO ZHIVKOV'S EXHORTATION THAT I BRING TO TOP LEVEL ATTENTION ANY "BUREAUCRATIC" OBSTACLE TO NORMALIZATION, I NOTED BULGARIA IS SOLE EE COUNTRY JAMMING
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VOA, OFFICIAL VOICE OF US GOVERNMENT. TODOROV RE-

PLIED CAUTIOUSLY THAT HE WAS NOT COMPETENT IN THIS QUESTION BUT ADDED THAT IN HIS VIEW "THIS IS PROBABLY LEFTOVER FROM DAYS OF COLD WAR". I BELIEVE HE WILL REPORT THIS APPROACH TO ZHIVKOV.

3. IN RAISING QUESTION OF DIVIDED FAMILIES I POINTED OUT IMPORTANCE OF SUCH ISSUE ON CONGRESSIONAL OPINION. A MEMBER OF OUR CONGRESS DOESN'T RECEIVE MUCH MAIL ABOUT BULGARIA BUT LETTERS ABOUT SUCH HARDSHIP CASES COULD HAVE DISPROPORTIONATELY NEGATIVE AFFECT. I SAID WE RECOGNIZE QUESTION IS COMPLICATED BUT WHILE EACH OF THE APPROXIMATELY 50 CASES IS DIFFERENT, MOVEMENT IN THIS AREA WOULD BE POSITIVE STEP IN OUR RELATIONS. TODOROV, NODDING AGREEMENT, SAID THAT "WITH GOOD WILL ON BOTH SIDES SOMETHING COULD BE DONE".

4. THERE FOLLOWED AN EXTENDED DISCUSSION OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS (TODOROV REFERRING TO "UNFREEZING"), WHICH WAS ESSENTIALLY ROUTINE.

5. TODOROV THEN SAID THAT CONTACTS BETWEEN BUSINESSMEN, ALTHOUGH A GOOD STEP, WHICH HE HOPED WOULD LEAD TO CONTRACTS, WERE NOT SUFFICIENT. "WE BELIEVE MUTUAL VISITS OF GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES ARE ALSO NECESSARY TO ENCOURAGE (PRIVATE) CONTACTS. BUT WE STILL SEE THAT SOME LACK OF CONFIDENCE EXISTS WHICH COULD MAKE OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS SUFFER". THIS WAS PROBABLY AN OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO THE LACK OF FIRM INVITATION TO DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER POPOV. TODOROV ALSO REFERRED TO FACT THAT US-BULGARIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AGREEMENT HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED. THE TONE, AS IN ALL MY CALLS TO DATE, WAS CORDIAL AND BUSINESS-LIKE. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ZAKHARIEVA ALSO ATTENDED THE MEETING.
HERZ

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